

HIV – THE BASICS



HIV is passed from one person to another through specific body fluids: blood, breast milk, and sexual fluids. It is passed during sex without a condom, through sharing needles or syringes, and from a parent to a child during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

HIV is not passed through saliva, sweat, tears, hugging, sharing food or being in the same space as someone. This is science, not opinion. [#HealthMatters](#)

 PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medication taken by **a person who does not have HIV** to prevent them from getting it. It is not HIV treatment. There are different forms of PrEP including daily pills, a monthly vaginal ring and injectables every two or six months.

[#MyPrEPMyChoice](#)

 PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) is medication taken **after** a potential exposure to HIV. It must be started within 72 hours, and ideally within the first 24 hours. It is not the same as PrEP.

 ART (antiretroviral therapy) is the treatment taken by **people living with HIV** to keep the virus under control. It is not the same as PrEP. A person living with HIV who is on ART and has an undetectable viral load cannot pass HIV to a sexual partner.

U = U, Undetectable equals untransmittable.

What you can ask for

At a health facility or through a community organisation, you can ask for:

- An HIV test, including a self-test kit you can use at home
- Oral PrEP - a daily pill that prevents HIV
- Two monthly cabotegravir (CAB) injectable PrEP
- Six monthly lenacapavir (LEN) injectable PrEP
- The monthly dapivirine vaginal ring PrEP
- PEP - if you think you have been exposed to HIV in the last 72 hours
- Condoms - to protect yourself from HIV, STIs and pregnancy

If one of these health products is out of stock or not available, you can ask for a different form of PrEP OR you can visit another health facility.

There are different forms of PrEP. Speak to your health care provider or a peer educator about the one that is best for you. Always remember that PrEP only prevents HIV. Condoms can prevent STIs and pregnancy. If you want further methods to prevent pregnancy, there are a range of options - your health care provider can help you find the one that's right for you. [#MyPrEPMyChoice](#)

P=P

PrEP=Prevention